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SUBJECT: UNAMID CIVILIAN RECRUITMENT PROCEEDS SLOWLY

¶1. (SBU) Deputy Director of the UNAMID Recruitment Office Haris Pajtic told poloff January 9 that civilian recruitment for the 5,500 civilian UNAMID positions is underway but admitted that serious obstacles remain. He said that his 12-person office expects to have recruited 50 percent of the positions by June 2008 and currently has filled 896 of its 1,147 positions, mostly with AMIS and UNMIS transfers. UNAMID plans to recruit 1,500 international staff, 700 to 1,000 United Nations Volunteers, and 3,000 national staff positions.

¶2. (SBU) Pajtic said that UNAMID has 600 vacancies in El-Fasher that it has not been able to fill from transferred UNMIS or AMIS staff, or even through local hires. He said that a week into the transition, UN headquarters in New York has still not provided final budget and personnel authority. As a result UNAMID is unable to make any recruitment decisions beyond the UNMIS or AMIS staff that was already in place. Once this is sorted out, he said UNAMID should be able to quickly recruit civilian personnel. Unlike UNAMID's military operations, Pajtic pointed out that there is no requirement for the civilian component to maintain an African character.

¶3. (SBU) Pajtic voiced familiar complaints that GoS visa issues are a "nightmare" and expressed concern that this will pose a serious obstacle to getting UN personnel into Sudan quickly. In addition, Pajtic pointed out that recruiting a UN employee for a new UN mission takes a significant amount of time. Once selected, given the need for training and processing of credentials, it could take several months for a new UN civilian hire to arrive in Sudan. However, he said this could be cut to two weeks for a transferred UN employee.

¶4. (SBU) Pajtic noted that retention will be also be a problem, as the conditions at UNAMID sites in Darfur are austere. However, he was optimistic that both recruits and transferred UN staff would see the career advantages inherent in working in Darfur. Despite this, Pajtic expressed concern that as of the first week in January, the UN has succeeded in hiring only five percent of the positions that had been deemed as "critical," such as technical and experienced senior staff.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: As with most aspects of UNAMID deployment, recruitment can be expected to proceed slowly. However, once the critical positions are filled we expect UNAMID's capacity to improve dramatically.

FERNANDEZ